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14 February 1959

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

14 February 1959

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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* UK-USSR: (The American Embassy in London reports indications that Prime Minister Macmillan has "election fever" and may be tempted to make proposals to the USSR primarily motivated by domestic political considerations. A large number of top-level officials will accompany the prime minister, and more than 100 newsmen are seeking visas.)

25X1

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UAR: Nasir intends to end, at least for the time being, his campaign against Communist influence in Iraq, according to an emissary from Nasir to Ambassador Hare. The emissary said this action is to be taken because Nasir believes he cannot continue to attack the Communists while the British and French governments remain hostile to him. Nasir may hope that the US will bring some pressure to bear on London and Paris in order to create a unified backing for him in the event of a further worsening of his relations with Moscow. A more important consideration for Nasir, however, probably is that his tactics toward Iraq have not succeeded.

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*Burma: General Ne Win, through his statements explaining his resignation as prime minister on 13 February, is apparently forcing a showdown in Parliament on the question of whether to make the constitutional changes necessary to permit his return to the premiership indefinitely or to call for elections in April. Ne Win may expect significant opposition to his request for such a constitutional amendment, particularly from former Prime Minister U Nu. However, he is probably counting on the threat of extra-legal action by the army to influence Parliament to return him to office on his terms.

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Japan - South Korea: In an effort to block implementation of Japan's decision to repatriate Koreans wishing to go to North Korea, the Rhee government has suspended further talks with Japan and begun demonstrations. It apparently intends also to cut off trade and step up seizures of Japanese fishing vessels. Despite an alert of South Korean armed forces, no military action is likely except for possible clashes between South Korean Coast Guard vessels and Japanese patrol craft.

25X1

LATE ITEM

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*Cuba: The resignation of Prime Minister Miro Cardona and his cabinet on 13 February and the assumption of the top cabinet post by Fidel Castro on 16 February will probably sharpen the latent conflict between Castro's "26 of July movement" and other groups that opposed former dictator Batista.

This is possibly Castro's first move toward the presidency; he was made eligible for the post by a recent constitutional revision lowering the age requirement. Another revision, conferring citizenship rights on foreigners who fought with the

14 Feb 59

DAILY BRIEF

Page iii

25X1

25X1

rebels, also makes the controversial leftist Argentine, "Che" Guevara, eligible for any high government post.

Castro's former position as chief of the armed forces now will probably fall to his younger brother, Raul, whose past actions have demonstrated his irresponsibility. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

14 Feb 59

DAILY BRIEF

iv

25X1

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

25X1

Soviet Views of Macmillan's Visit to Moscow

[The Soviet leaders apparently believe that British views on Berlin and Germany and the likelihood of British elections this year can be exploited to weaken Western unity. The first secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Bonn implied [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] that the USSR considers Britain the "weakest link" in the Western front and may drive a "hard bargain" during Prime Minister Macmillan's visit. He hinted that the USSR might suggest withdrawing its Berlin demands in exchange for cancellation of plans for West German nuclear rearmament.]

[Moscow probably feels that Macmillan's desire for a "peacemaker" role, together with the pressure of British public opinion for a lessening of East-West tensions, makes him particularly vulnerable on the German issue.]

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[The Soviet leaders, reminded of the benefits former Prime Minister Eden derived in his 1955 election campaign from having advocated a summit meeting, may seek to obtain at least a tacit endorsement from Macmillan of the desirability of another heads-of-government conference and favorable reference to European security measures such as a nonaggression pact or a reduction of foreign forces in Germany. Soviet propaganda is stressing the British people's concern over trends in West Germany and their desire for a policy "independent of that imposed by the Adenauer-Dulles partnership."]

[In discussing the Berlin problem with Macmillan, Khrushchev probably will repeat the line he took with the Norwegian ambassador on 9 February, when he warned that Soviet troops would immediately react to any violation of the East German frontier by Western forces. He remarked on the significance of Secretary Dulles' reference to the formula that the East Germans might act as "agents" of the USSR and said this formulation, while unfortunate, was a move in the right direction. Khrushchev again denied that his Berlin proposal was intended as]

25X1

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[an ultimatum, but said the turnover of Soviet functions to the
East Germans could occur sooner or later than 27 May.]

25X1

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25X1

14 Feb 59

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

Page 2

Approved For Release 2002/09/04 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004300240001-7

25X1

Macmillan's Visit to the Soviet Union

The British Foreign Office is preparing a list of questions to be used as "guideposts" for Prime Minister Macmillan's discussions during his week- to ten-day visit to Moscow beginning on 21 February. According to a Foreign Office official, London hopes to ascertain how confident Khrushchev is that the USSR is sufficiently strong to prevent any modification of the European situation. Britain would also like to determine whether the USSR is so apprehensive of a "German-US alliance in NATO" as to consider war to prevent its further development. The importance London attaches to the forthcoming trip is indicated by the large number of top-level officials who will accompany Macmillan.

The US Embassy feels that Macmillan now has entered the period of "election fever" and may have to be held back "by the coattails" from pushing proposals aimed at impressing the British electorate. The embassy also feels that if British elections were scheduled to follow an East-West conference, the British Government would be under pressure to produce results and "agreements."

Macmillan may be considering a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union. In a possible trial balloon, Reuters on 11 February said that London diplomatic quarters expect Khrushchev to propose a bilateral pact during Macmillan's visit. According to these diplomats, Soviet leaders believe Macmillan's denial of an intention to negotiate would not rule this out.

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Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

II. ASIA-AFRICA

25X1

Nasir Says He Plans to Drop Campaign Against Iraqi Communists

(Nasir, through Cairo newspaperman Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, informed Ambassador Hare on 11 February that the UAR campaign against the Iraqi Communists will be gradually abandoned for "tactical reasons." Haykal added that suppression of Egyptian and Syrian Communists would continue, however, as would the UAR's "basic hostility" toward those in Iraq.)

(Nasir's reason for dropping the campaign, according to Haykal, is his feeling that he cannot continue while the French and British still show no indication of changing their opposition to the UAR. He complained specifically of press and clandestine radio attacks against him and alleged British delay in completing financial negotiations with the UAR. Haykal stated that Nasir's complaint did not include the United States, whose position throughout the Iraqi-UAR dispute was "unprecedented in its wisdom.")

(Various considerations, besides that put forth by Haykal, probably entered into the decision. Nasir has had virtually no success in shaping events in Iraq according to his desire, and he has run considerable risk of seriously damaging his relations with the Communist bloc, which backs Iraqi Premier Qasim. Nasir is unlikely to stop all clandestine opposition to Baghdad, however, and would probably still attempt to aid any internal movement in Iraq which appeared to him capable of displacing the present regime. The approach to Ambassador Hare may have been partly designed to elicit some assurance of American support.)

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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Japanese - South Korean Crisis

South Korea has responded to Japan's decision to permit the voluntary repatriation of Korean residents in Japan who desire to go to North Korea by breaking off negotiations to normalize relations with Japan, by commencing nationwide anti-Japanese demonstrations, and by announcing an intention to step up seizures of Japanese fishing boats and to cut off trade.

The South Korean Coast Guard and the Air Force allegedly have been alerted to intercept "any ships" carrying repatriates. These orders are unlikely to result in military action. Actual sailing of repatriation vessels is several months away, and the most serious incidents likely at the present time are clashes between South Korean and Japanese patrol vessels.

25X1

The Japanese have intimated they might arm their patrol vessels, which heretofore have been defenseless, but Tokyo is planning to request International Red Cross or possibly North Korean transportation for the repatriates.]



The Kishi Government's decision to act unilaterally on the repatriation issue probably stems from a desire to keep it from developing into a major domestic political problem. (Other factors such as the problem of internal security, the expense of maintaining many destitute Koreans, pressure on the labor market, and Japan's vulnerability to charges of violation of "human rights" also entered into the decision.) In any event, Japan sees little chance of normalizing relations with South Korea.

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